POETRY QUARTERLY

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Subscriptions

As there will be no further issues of POETRY QUARTERLY *subscribers will be credited with the amount due to them by the distributors* THE BOOK CENTRE, NORTH CIRCULAR ROAD, NEASDEN, N.W. 10, *to whom all correspondence should be addressed.*

EDITORIAL

POETRY magazines have come and gone but *Poetry Quarterly* has continued for well beyond a decade. Editing it has become a pleasurable habit though sometimes an irritating one. Now perhaps on the threshold of what is hailed as a new era it may be time to take stock. Is there a need for this magazine and does it print the kind of verse now being written by contemporary poets. Ten years ago there was a definite change in the accents of the younger poets then beginning to write, a different mood. It was exciting as the birth of new movements in every kind of art always are. There was promise of greatness, a promise in very few cases fulfilled. Unlike the post-war period after the first war the spiritual climate of our own after war period has been deadening and unproductive. Time is a clown who is the final arbiter of these things and it is impossible to foresee from any side of the ring what his next joke will be. Poetry is still being written, but in this country the work of the under thirties is certainly remarkable for what one well-known reviewer called "a glib flatness". There have always been glib flat poets in all periods. But it is not necessary to encourage them. It is more than a little probable that the wrtiing of good English poetry has moved westwards, and that the future is in the U.S.A. and the new Dominions such as the West Indies where there is a conjunction of vitality and the English language.

Poetry Quarterly has been lucky in possessing that necessity so often ignored by the promoters of little magazines—a publisher, and if now we have to come to our announcement that this will be the last issue it must be understood that it is the decision of the editor and not the publisher. Without the support and personal interest of Mr. Peter Baker, chairman of Falcon Press, it would have been impossible to continue publication in these difficult years. The editor wishes to thank the many hundreds of readers, contributors and correspondents who have kept his faith in what he was doing alive by their unselfish collaboration over such a long period. There are still a few with us from our first year. We shall now depart to a "resonant silence" among our desert crags, but may still allow ourselves the interested stare of the ageing eagle looking down on the dusty plains where the termites interminably devour.

EDGAR FOXALL

The Ruin

What draws us here? Ruin on ruin on ruin.
These images compel. We who are poets
move among bland, sardonic, ignorant faces
in a chauvinistic half-light
Mist-smoke over
the leaning stack, lonely as a monolith.

It is time now to compute
sunflower medallions over the rotted fence,
these last survivors of a clear blue cock-crow;
a few glazed shards among the spiders
and shadows pooled under the wasted trees.

Evening becomes
and from the darkening spinney
the call of rooks is sharp and necessary,
mauve is the light which lines their vaulting wings
above this mirage of a gentle purpose.
Thick wall, barbed roof, ivy along the lintel
where toad path gathers nettles for the Spring,

and thistles foam upon the severing winds.
What draws us here? Ruin on ruin on ruin.
Time dilutes memory. Here is so diffuse
a memory in the vanishing spider's eye
glancing upon this debris of disuse
where broken mirrors hold a mocking sky.

The earth is charmed of ruin. Even now
this land is pock-marked by the raw, brash villa.
the day's defaulting taste. All ghosts of ruin,
tile, coping, frame, a speechless intercession
to be deferred a season from the moss
and sedulous lichen.
Every careful city
bears in its heart the horror of its tomb.

PHILIP O'CONNOR

Son Cœur N'est Pas Un Luth Suspendu

His heart is a fiddle. Bow well. Bow finely,
sweep the circumspect music
from the whole body of life.
and pick,
alight,
the fireflies of the night
and place,
in the dawn
tomorrow's spawn.

Yap by the watermills grilling the long slices of Sunday
silence.
Sing (she shall be a vase who holds
the lovelier imitations
in dark-coloured pauses, of the song).
Make every performance that in the slightest degree both
contrives and ensures
survival with use but never—
and how the day makes broken biscuits in the sky!—
bow slightly, bow badly;
the slightest scrape of the violin-heart as you know
in bemusement of art makes him mad. Bow well, bow
finely;
his heart is a fiddle
for swansongs, new songs and tittle—
tattle. Son cœur n'est pas un luth suspendu,
mais un violin qui peût même supporter
les airs abstraits.

WREY GARDINER

Time in Africa

How cold and inconsiderate are the lights of time
Shimmering like Africa, doomed in its own blood.

We came down into Tripoli on a beam from 12,000 feet
After being a fortnight lost in the Sahara.

Camels are alone and individual in a line across the
horizon
As death dreams of Soho in the afternoon of thought.

In the sweat of Africa all poems are lost,
Only the light lives and laughs with the naked boys.

You have to shout, raise your voice, take a bottle by the
neck.
To defend nothing, to laugh at everything,

To want only truth in the bottom of the lagoon
Where the bodies lie and are eaten before they can dream.

In the dust of Africa we are broken, but survive
To live in time like Rimbaud lost in Abyssinia.

The love of life slithering on its belly towards death
Is something unforgettable like a butterfly

Too large, too beautiful, too soon
Trodden underfoot by those who kill

And do not know that life can be love
Like a diamond smuggled across frontiers

For money to buy women, to buy time
That leads quickly to death without immortality.

Only the hyenas laugh in the heart of the night,
In the black, cold, doubtful night of Africa.

LOUIS JOHNSON

The Burden

The sticks of the years beat on my back and break,
and kissmarks cross, spell out the soft defeats
gathered to stipple laurels—ring the shattered bark
against the shellshock waters' battering sights.

Grown violent in the stones of horoscopes,
I set the stars against the headstone country
and stone the boy of image in his hopes
swept off his feet in the undertow of a century
biting the thumbs of purpose. I fling the stone of
answers and it cries in the thigh of love.

Two-headed now, my life flies under wheels
of trafficked heaven wheeling its load of scars
hurt by the sticks and kisses love conceals
and life doles out as manifold as stars.

To gamble my luck breaks down the rider
and loss dismounts to labour as my son
whom I must own and succour: the provider
of the good is clockwise-everlasting up and gone
to summarise tote profits, mark as fools
such as myself, the grist that grinds his mills.

Exceeding small, and ragged in boom's virtues,
my tattered property of kicks and scratches
writhes against love whose all familiar bitches
know when a feather falls, and whom it matches.

Then give me grief of greater sticks I pray
and crueler boils that I may know my sore
and putrefy with dying song live day,
the graphic mystery pencilled at the core.

EARLE BIRNEY

Bushed

He invented a rainbow but lightning struck it
shattered it into the lake-lap of a mountain
so big his mind slowed when he looked at it

Yet he built a shack on the shore
learned to roast porcupine belly and
wore the quills on his hatband.

At first he was out with the dawn
whether it was yellowed bright as wood-columbine
or was only a fuzzed moth in a flannel of storm
but he found the mountain was clearly alive
sent messages whizzing down every hot morning
boomed proclamations at noon and spread out
a white guard of goat
before falling asleep on its feet at sundown

When he tried his eyes on the lake, ospreys
would fall like valkyries
choosing the cut-throat
He took then to waiting
till the night smoke rose from the boil of sunset

But the moon carved unknown totems
out of the lakeshore
owls in the beardusky woods derided him
moosehorned cedars circled his swamps and tossed
their antlers up to the stars
Then he knew though the mountain slept, the winds
were shaping its peak to an arrowhead
poised

But by now he could only bar himself in and wait
for the great flint to come singing into his heart.

GORDON WHARTON

The Famine

Under the dark tree grew a thorn
on the dry hillside in the month of hunger:
over the plain ten stallions trampled
the wheat and the streams to dust and mud,
and the thorn grew bright in the dark trees' shade.

The sun threw down a golden knife
and red flowers boomed like drums in the shadows.
The bird of hunger sat in a tree:
Dry wind doth blow today my love
and the girls are silent on the hillside.

Under the dark trees grew a bright thorn
and stabbed the girls on the silent hill,
their ribs lay whitely gleaming;
ten stallions pounded their bones to dust,
and the scaldcrow died with the water.

Red flowers deafened the curling shadows
when I came here, and the crops were dust—
marvellous traveller with no gifts to give,
only in my mouth the burning anger
and a thin voice to feed the dead.

The eaters of food died of hunger,
starved straws guarded the silent girls,
and nothing is left but my ghost of a voice
to tell of the black crow, the thundering horses,
and the bright thorn under the dark tree.

IAIN FLETCHER

In veritatem ex umbris transiens

I

I cry out in pain and in praise,
my mouth bunched to silence, a hollow fruit,
but I do not know what I say or to whom I should speak,
and in what tongue, in what tone,
by what royalty of meaning . . . .
though they write in Cnidos as in Corinth
and along the paving of the half drowned Latin cities
that you turn a hundred faces to the earth
and order the declension of the seasons,
the riddle of the fruiting and the long knife.

But as in a dream what is hoped for happens horribly
and loved faces expand and collapse,
as in a dying astronomer's brain,
all these faces are turned from me.

I would call you. But I do not know your name;
you have so many names
and all the names spelt backwards like a curse . . . .

II

And yet they write who have grown wise in love
each minute is fragmented by your assumption;
and as those rays from some mysterious eye,
watching deep in space,
deep set under the sparkling forehead of Ialdabaoth,
pass through clouds, through houses and through men,
but leave no sign of their majestic wounding,
so through a million bodies you
and by a million emanations move;
and bear and kill even as you couple.

In a thousand groves, in a thousand temples,
to the sound of timbrels by the waterside
wherever the dance torments the feet
in Chartres, in Cnidos, in Nazareth
I would call you, but do not know your name
you have so many names . . . .

In Chartres, in Cnidos, in Nazareth and in London
wherever the human temple rests.

III

You have so many names and like a scholar
I would render them for their grace that saddens
as buried scents corrupt the memory
and sting with their own sweetness . . . .

This land is of olives only
a small dry ground for the Goddess
there is no one's name to grow big,
a mysterious fruit in the mouth,
with the limpid noise of someone singing in a cave . . . .
though here in transitory light,
in wolf-light of Black Artemis,
crouched in the ordured shrine,
I have been afraid of a faceless lover
and heard her stifling a cry
through refraction of blossoms
here on a small dry ground . . . .

and heard her singing through the rock.

IV

Barbelo, I was Barbelo, Mother of God,
Flame of the Father, Love of His Mind
who wandered from the bridal throne
and sinned with many angels.
And I descended lower,
descended into earth,
coming to this last shape, Ennoia,
I have kissed all faces, lain with all the nations,
sung at every cross road in the earth.

I drunk with thieves at night time
and hid murderers of men among the lice of my warm bed.
It was in Tyre of Syria at a crossing of the ways
one night I stood up naked, the timbrel in my hand,
and the sailors danced and the storm rain bruised the roof
and the vapours of wine half-veiled their mouths;
and there was a great cloud of lamps . . . .
I was that Helen
who lived where the birds' sigh
trembled like a breathing harp string;
and many times I rose from the sea
and lay in Egypt while that stately doll
brought the last violence on Troy . . . .
Helen Ennoia . . . .

V

Mosaic of flesh and ghost
in the slender house of her womb
circumscription of the uncircumscribed,
sit tecum dominus and she conceived.
Unfurrowed by the ploughman ever
the field where the wheat rose in blessing of ripeness
and unsown yielded fruit of the world:
for the fountain overflows the garden
where the gardener walks no more . . . .
The Phœnix is rising from all and from nothing.
The loom of incarnation
is weaving the garment of union.
. . . and the three strange Maries shadowing the cross
with the distance of their sorrow,
the noise of Pietà.
But ageless in the Pietà,
the tall blue Virgin of Chartres,
Virgin of Chartres, of Lourdes and of Cnidos,
younger than the Son she cradles
in the last Pietà.
To whom they made love by logic.

VI

There was Poliziano
who fell in love with a face of Botticelli;
there was Simonetta gliding on green grass
—as Cypris in Hesiod's singing—
mellowing the green
into blue and vermilion
wherever the dulcet vibrance of her foot
bruised with blessing.
Birds sang in wild Latin, every step of the stream
was painted with the faces of Simonetta
like the procession of the Holy Ghost
hundreds upon hundreds of times
pointed, counterpointed,
and her name lithe on the wind
wandered and wound
through fish-ingeminated grottos.

VII

And in London too . . . .
I know your name though you escape me.
I see your face that is featureless
and look into the blank map of your eyes
stained the colour of night . . . .
for the heart of the mystery is a ray in the heart of a
child
cruel and trivial
and Godhead flickers here . . . .
I will quench the flame on your mouth
and bring you no nearer . . . .

VIII

Now that the evening of the world declines
into the last light of our vigil here
the stony question is its own response.
Only these masks are real:
Mother of Earth, Demeter, Ceres,
even the dove-occulted Goddess;
and we fulfil them in faith
choristers without name . . . .

PHILIP CALLOW

These Golden Trophies of the Sun

These golden trophies of the sun;
See how indifferent they hang there
In the bright wash of rain,
Taking their green sticky blood
And putting white flesh unerringly
Between each slowly plunging centre,
And the world

As their burning goes out
In the soft wet mud of the field
Does it affect their truth
That love or dread or innocence
May even now have nailed
Someone above them?

The fruit rots down
Like the dreams of countless poets,
And those faint cries, and
Bulbous, leering mouths, and all
The human whips of pain
Are not wholly lost in this dark rotting,
Which takes all for its indifferent splendour.

My Hands Have Separate Desires

My hands have separate desires
Which baffle me, defy my reasoning;
One is beautiful and phantom
In its wandering white love
And its great hungering.
For what dreams like a chill statue
In rotting gardens of the heart;
While the other hounds and massacres
All ideals, those holy innocents,
Between its gross and fearful fingers,
Darkening always for an older, real innocence.

GRAHAM ACKROYD

On Charlie Chaplin's Return Visit to Kennington, 1952

I have travelled long on lonely journeys,
and slept long nights under stars.

Alone is the journey.

I have travelled rough ways;
untracked ways, over
the barren plain and poisoned marsh.

Uncertain is the heart.

But where, now, are the streets I left behind?
Where the hurdy-gurdy man and the dancing
monkey?
Where the hop-scotch girls?
And the games we played with chalk?

O alone and uncertain is the journey of the heart
That crosses the desolate mountain.

O lonely the heart.

OSWELL BLAKESTON

Honesty

dirty bundle
swan asleep
wait till the beak
comes hissing out in love
and swan as beautiful as you
when you are not asleep.

NICHOLAS MOORE

Aspects of Love

(FOR SHIRLEY)

Love, that was like a spear to the pure heart,
Came in one Friday like a cushion cloud.
The jewels from her ears like drops of blood
Hung in their corners.

Love was a grief ago
Two beads unstrung, two watery pits of fire.

I know love like a lantern in the night,
Cold, and impure, hung with dry syllables
Of light and silver-flecked, miraculous
And aching with grief, like that old Chinese moon

Tinkerbell, thank you, Belle, and Ollygazoom
Love came like a cold, and left like the hand of Doom

Hanging knights,
knights terrible with mirth
And love itself a vampire to the earth,
Sucking its blood until the withered tree
Alone in the morning stood leafless over me.

Love's hand like two white serpents point to hell,
A clock whose fingers have no time to tell.

Dwelling in me love was a solemn bird;
She came in spring, and left without a word
When the small maple flamed its glossy red,
Ashamed

Love was an idol smashed by careless shoes,
A view upon a hill, ill, whispered news;
It had its priests: it had its servitors,
Its brigands and its bold financiers.

Love was a horse I never backed to lose.

Politic men speaking polite sad words
Attend the hearse; and all their woe's absurd.
They did not know the little sad white shape
Under the black and unforgiving drapes;
They did not know the dwarf, unhappy child;
Its lovers were not there, nor was the world.

I cried myself into a nightly sleep.

Grace and disgrace, love's either servitors,
Foes, friends and follies—Love was far too wise
To choose a wise man for that wit of hers;
Ingenious jesting came too near the bone;
Better that love should sit to eat alone,
Served by an idiot, and fed with lies.
She cannot there sit naked in disguise.

I saw Love's nakedness and turned away:
"Growth" said the spectre, "Growth is just decay."
Fore ears and eyes and mouth these spectral things
Too servile for my slack imaginings,
And for a ripe good humour
All Love could grow was an abysmal tumour.

Deep in the grass the worms of horror lay
Waiting to feed on Love's foredoomed decay.

Love's apple with a maggot at the core;
Love's native with a red crab in the maw;
Love was the one I did not dare adore.

Sickness sat, like a vulture on his throne,
Above, below, inside the white thigh-bone . . . .

Love was a thing venereal and coarse,
And adder sucking death's blood from a corpse . . . .

Love was a carnival: a face of masks:
Behind the masks feasted the skeletons:
The clack and clangour of their bones grew loud
One Friday night.

Love sat upon a cloud.

I heard a beggar ask a king for bread.
"Love" was the word the wise man never said.

I saw a donkey riding on a horse.

Each new pronunciamento from the Hall
Is but a part of Love's new protocol,
And all those dumb, grey, harassed characters
Are emissaries of Love, ambassadors.

Love is a soft-shoe dancer, and a fraud,
A pig, an anemone, a dog, a bawd.
Love is a world that feeds on its own fire:
A phoenix in the ashes of desire.
Love is a word.

Love cannot be pronounced in Hollywood.
It's unAmerican: it ain't no good.
Like an enormous traitor made of wood.

It belongs to an ancient Europe.
It belongs to an ancient Asia.
It's the North Pole and the South Pole,
And it circles the equator.
You build it up in Scotland
And down in Timbuctoo,
But if you go for the brave New World
It won't be there for you.
In spite of all the kissing,
It's been reported missing,
And though you keep on wishing
Through all the hullaballoo,
It won't be there for you.

Ah! the laurel and the rue:
The Tom-Tom and the piccolo.
Hooded figures have bound love and beaten it,
And hung it from the willow
Waly-O

Loveless love.

To which we do aspire.
Ooh tinny, tinny tune,
Ti-tum, ti-tumpty kiss of fire.
Ire of the gods,
Ira,
Anger.

Love is a strangler in the park:
Love's double-face,
Love's double-eyes,
Hair of the cats and claw of blood.

Love is no good.

I loved a hell-cat
And I live to rue it.

The abandoned.

Yet pure the jewels sparkle in the sun,
Jewels upon her ears I can't afford,
Blood drops, rubies, or green of olivine,
Deep course of passion through the red and green,
Beginning before its begun,
The tone of pulse or word,
Unseen, unknown, unheard,
Anguished and blind,
In heart, in bone, in mind,
The river sweeps to flood . . . .

Love feeds and fires the blood.

Love like the snow is cold.

Love's autumn chills the world.

Four Night-Songs

"Ach! Sie flehen dich . . . ."

I. YOU AND THE NIGHT AND THE MUSIC

Who cares if the Florentine Nightingale
Dances on the boughs of the neglected willow?
For tonight Harry MacLoud
Or some other gentleman in a black hat
Will walk nonchalantly by the window,
And the screaming doves will coo in the holly-bush.

How right my mother was!
And how the ineffable year tallies,
Season after season, and the thrush and the goldfinch
Go, like God, to their respective ardours.
And tonight the man's hat may be of peacock blue,
And Harry MacLoud mean nothing at all to you.

And who by the waters of Loch Awe
Sat down and wept, while the silver waters trembled
In the flush of the sunshine, and night—
Delicate with the soft lap of waves—
Grew into a solemn gentleman, spectral, lustrous
Whose hat was white with a candid incandescence?

O it is always the first flush of youth we remember,
Dancing in the stone courtyard among the moonbeams!
Two stood so silent that you would have thought
Elizabeth, Elizabeth cried the holy vaulting heavens.
But only a man passed in a red tam-o-shanter.
How right my mother was!

Who cares indeed if the nightingale of Avisa
Cries love advisedly in her white throat?
O Phil, O Phil, O darling Philomel.
The old stones of the bridge bark where the willow
Trails down its ancient head, and a man is a dark
Mote in the night passing;
man who is dark, and a mote.

II. MIND WITH A VEILED OFFENCE

Grains falling—
Tonight is never the same as today.
I take your hand, and grace you with a smile.
We'll eat and hear the howling gramaphoon.

And then beneath the moon
Too soon
In June
The days will bark and fattened babies roll
Agurgling in their prams.

Or if the venerable
Person disdains, we'll hear them read our poems
Amidst the rumbling of electric fans——

And in the wood the whirr of pigeons' wings.

III. MORNING THOUGHT

Too soon is delicate enough for me.
I cannot wait for night, and his black tie.

IV. JUST A SHADE AT EVENING

Ghost-thought, ghost-look and ghost-time.
Dreeps the moonlight waving through the curtain,
And on its wings of felt the bat, and omen
Flickers and jigs, a little unsure of itself:—
Shall we eat each other?
Or go to bed at noon?

SEYMOUR GRESSER

The Galleons of Sodom

The black sails break through water
bearing ashes and exiled sons
whose fathers perished shouting their last pain
foretelling who would point out our first brief pleasure

the fire follows, and cups of birds
with wings edged black and cinders
stuck to their beaks
dip in the ship-wake
cleansing the scaled feet of gold
whose flight shall bring to harbour
impatient men with uncrowned heads
trembling vindictively to begin again.

O not of my world
though I have slept in Sodom,
not my child whose sleep
waits no dawn bell to break upon his body
charted oceans he would not follow,
red-veined women well used in other days.

This is the finer grain from the plowed ground
untouched by teacher, untaught by fire
grown and logged and shaped into keel
and sailing before the last mast bathed the sky

lest I remember a heritage of love and hate
when a cold day was summer
and hunger the well-fed heart
and vision both blind and eagle

I reached breaking the twigs of the sun
and tinder of stars
and rubbed from charmed and chaste eyes
locked as spores
one and green in name
backed from mariner-hands

the stiff brittle decades
and winter thaws of the heart
which
        for the rising monumental city
build the icetowers
and snowbells of slow prayers before the age is named

        Sodom or Eden—
thousand-facet footstep
and the sane unasking flesh
walking from a gargoyled grave
by every touch with eye you gave
and never held
                the tall spar-tentacled buoys
                the whistling happy women of the waves
along the bowbone's edge and water halved too by the moon . . .

the world be nameless gathering
such saviours as have bristled the wind
        set sail as the city fell
and you watched your birthrite burn
riding forth with full holds
and beneath you
                with the day your tender love
stirs a twisting smoke, you, mist,
                uneasy shifting the restless sea of sleep
haunched and invisible
                the whisper through a city's men—
and hum of an old woman walking your thin-twigged road

CHARLES CAUSLEY

Sea Fever

Upon the atlas of my love
I launch my golden galley,
I press my crew my deed to do
from every star-fed alley.

Lovely the landfall that I make
Within her shaking lair
As beached I lie upon her eye
And anchored in her hair.

Let all the bells of midnight break
Above the brimful river
Where white I'm wed on my salt bed
And turn and burn for ever.

MADGE HALES

To Two Apart

Tentative gestures of hope flounder,
Empty seas surround her island self,
No love scene flanks waking to sleeping,
Nothing the seascape gives widens her eye.

Lost from contact of flesh dreams die
The weighted wound falls fathoms deep
In dread of dry unrippled silence, no thrall
Of a thousand thongs binding lover to lover

Waiting is the lesson still unlearned
So shadow all those actions still to be,
Let the heart open as time shortens
The wave leap as moon breaks spray.

And with returning all her ways be sure,
The same gesture fire and comfort both;
As long as the last day of separation
Be their reunion, their depravity, their play.

HAZEL ROGERS

The Child

The year is in the child.
His eyes, myopic with unknowing,
Wonder their secrets against
The wet window panes,
And, like snowdrop blades, pierce
Winter's dark earliness with their fears.

Restless his feet to climb
Towards the first ripening.
But the white blossom must set
With fruit bitter at the taking too soon.
The birds peck savagely
At the grey bark, maliciously at insects,
Their round eyes, and his, shocked
At the brown lisle stockings, severed legs stretched
Over the boughs of earwigs and reddening fruit.

His summer fingers are connoisseurs,
Kinder than the grey sea-gull's bill,
Within the seaweed folded pool.
In the second tide, the moon that turns
His bed to fire, freezes his pool
Around his burning nakedness.

On the mid-day harvest cart
His shadow is small protection.
He lies, sucking dreams through the golden straws
That stigmatise his sun-burnt flesh.
In his tomorrow's year he pins his blindfold youth
Upon the rear part of the donkey of existence.

January 16th, 1950. Rimbaud understood that it is necessary to cast off the uniform of the past, to live naked under the light of the universal present. I must be, am, and will be this blinding hope of colour, far from the coal fires of this awful evening of January in Knightsbridge, the laughable suburb of London, the immoral horror of horrors. I feel the change in my bones though, the difference of tempo to something so completely different to anything I have been during the forties. The wine of a new life is in my brain. I know I can still write a good poem. If I can only be faithful to poetry I am saved, in the desert of time, in the wilderness of men. To be precise about beauty is my dream. I have seen something desperately lovely before. Surely I shall see it again. The prose and the poem are one.

Jan. 18th. I must have money to go to Morocco this autumn. If I wrote only a page a day I could write another novel in six months. I must do it. The novel after all is what we all gloat over. I can almost hear the guitar and the cante hondo in the hot night. The new decade has started. It is in my blood. I feel wild and creative, utterly unlike anything I have ever been. I am determined to write and write and write. But there must be money. Rimbaud knew that poetry must in the end be turned into African commerce.

Jan. 19th. This book I will keep as my stronghold of truth. I want to write another novel and am moving towards it, but the world intervenes with its ridiculous bustle, like a Victorian behind. It is very cold. Snow is falling, or should have fallen. I want to retire into my novel. I want to create, to turn away from the tripe of superficial living. I seem to be having to add pieces here and there in place of other pieces to my last work. It is all very humiliating. The saving curtain of music helps me.

Jan. 20th. I must get into the unreal real. Yet the truth presses in on one on all sides. It seems we must be all dead a long time before the truth can be read by ordinary decent people. But I feel the chains slipping off me. And I think Ezra Pound is an old —— in spite of his misfortunes. Oh! Money how sweet is the sound of thy chink in my ear. Money means Morocco. It is useless to write fantasies about uterine memories. The bald delightful truth is so much more beautiful. For instance the story of a famous editor seen near his home with a string bag and a ration book in tears because he didn't know how to use either. Did he

ever know how to do anything except edit a magazine? How sad is the life of writers, a matter of ribaldry to all, of desperate misery to the writer himself. Had lunch with Alan Ross. I shall always like him in a strange sort of way, ever since the drunken evening when I fell on my face in Shaftesbury Avenue. But that was years ago. Time is a dream, a fantasy of the gods. Experience is a beautiful meat, like a steak when one is hungry. A woman singing makes me sad. The longing for eternity is deep in the womb-like woman's voice, springing from her body, a scented hyacinth in spring. But here we are in winter with the imagination dead. And I have to write a book in the next six months because I am not satisfied with anything I have done for the last five or six years.

Jan. 22nd. Saw a very superficial verse play by Christopher Fry called "The Lady's not for Burning" last night. Poor stuff. I prefer something like "Maya". Fortunately Eliot's plays were not written for village halls as Mr. Fry's seem to have been. His undergraduate humour was, at times, nauseating. The public, of course, love it. My first wife is angling for my love. My last love loves me desperately, poor thing. I am reading the Goncourts' Journal, one of my favourite books. What a real masterpiece. Oh! the magnificence of the spirit, the love of the mind, the glittering butterfly of wit. My difficulty is in the division of desire between my life of books, my inner stream of real living and appreciation of the great world of the past and my need to escape to Timbuktu, to see the world of the snake and the sun, to live outside the wretched disaster of suburban failure. Lear would love my laughter, Baudelaire knew my need of the heat's power.

Jan. 23rd. Literary gossip, literary life, often miserable as it is, and the glittering hope of Africa keep me alive. Asthma devitalizes me. It is a hard and sinister world, all a matter of luck, the dark smile of the gods. The long journey into the sun is my only hope. To Morocco, to Timbuktu, to the Brazils. It is my imagination against the sordid back draught of reality, the dank cloud of northern capitals. Dragging a blue rum jar back from the office to Beaufort Gardens a policeman asked me if I thought I was Gunga Din. Who am I, I wonder? What I really want is an edition of the *Causeries du Lundi* of Sainte Beuve, l'oncle Beuve.

Jan. 24th. After a sober evening the girls prompt me to borrow money from them to buy something to drink. So Cynthia and I and the poodle Penny take a bus to the west end and hover in front of the well lit windows of the Shaftesbury Wine Stores.

We return clutching bottles of yellow Chartreuse and Barsac. I retire to my garret, deeply ashamed to be engaged in emasculating a novel, even if it deals with a noble subject, when one should be reading the Memoirs of Berlioz. In one's youth one is never taught that history is the delightful leavings of intelligent men, and not the rotting archives of putrescent states. The piano is an instrument that one cannot hear in the Sahara. I shall live as a man alone writing in a small room of what he has known. But not novels.

Jan. 27th. There is interference on my radio. I cannot get to Africa. I want to write a play—wasted effort probably—before August, the earliest date when I can get away. Must I always suffer these dreadful fog-bound winters? The famous Second Empire courtesan La Paiva shut herself up for three years to obtain her dream by the power of thought, by will power, to become a famous whore covered with emeralds. Cannot I take a plane with all my hidden thinking of long journies? Long ago, and just recently, I have been to the places my spirit dwells in. I want to take a house for a month at the rate of five shillings a week in the most delectable spot and live there with my poetry of the spirit, far away from this hell of fog-bound dirty streets in the most sordid of the great capitals of the world. I know it is possible as it is possible to lose a day by going backwards round the world. One can lose a month free from the imbecilities of so-called civilisation.

Jan. 30th. Feeling of great crisis. Drinking port and eating oysters with Cynthia in Carter's Bar (now Jules), in Jermyn Street. That girl has winkled me out of Grey Walls to this garret in Knightsbridge. I believe she will yet set up house for me in Morocco. That is when I depart for Timbuktu. But before I go I want to write a play—as a parthian shot. Who has ever heard of the Parthians in the nineteen fifties. I can no longer drink Burgundy because it gives me asthma. This bi-focalism of the soul eats into the time of the heart. In this harsh fog-bound climate nothing is possible. One cannot even find the perfect drink. Altering the last word in a poem I am happier. Poems are my paradise, my unalterable hope. But plays—let us shiver and be careful. I must go to bed for lack of fuel. In England they burn coal, but there isn't any coal. Three old women are living only in order to make my life a desparate misery. They are all evil in varying degrees. Pictures, poetry are my living, and the ghost of music which haunts me like the memory of some virgin

I have deflowered long ago. Cyril Conolly will never write his preface to Harry Crosby's Memoirs. He has disappeared into a strange mist as I have. Alan Ross is just down the road, as he has always been—one road or another-—but I don't often see him. I feel as if I were writing this in the middle of the Sahara, dying of thirst, or further south even, dying of mosquitoes. But it is still under a Knightsbridge date line. Oh! God let me lapse into the purity of my own vision. Music, in the end, is the only love. I can rape her and never be dissatisfied. Through music I can feel the power of God. I am God. And the Devil those droll creations of a soured humanity. They are not satisfied with the sun. But the sun becomes the devil. It is all a matter of latitude. Poetry is still the little gleam of light at the end of the tunnel. Gregorio Prieto came to see me today. He wants to go to what he calls north America where the dollars are. People write to me from San Francisco praising my poems. They are the Americans who want dollars themselves, the poets of America who are as poor as we are in Europe. Somehow between us we shall come together even if it is in Morocco, among the Arabs, the people. The tears of the Prophets run down my cheeks. I weep for the artist, the last pilgrim on the road of survival, in our dim hell of the twentieth centry.

Feb. 2nd. Le Sacre du Printemps. To how many springs have I sacrificed? The virgin has been deflowered three times. The years have revolved. I still have much energy. But this feeble diary is not enough. I am still like a man shut up in the hold of a sailing vessel, straining at sea. Yesterday evening Vivienne Koch and Jock (W. S.) Graham came in for martinis which they said were the best since New York. Cynthia is a good mixer. Poor girl she has mixed her drinks too well and is starting another baby which may drown under a deluge of gin or survive like Simon to be the pride of the household. Cynthia says it is a girl. She has an uncanny knowledge of the sex of unborn infants. They were interested in my novel and forced me to show it to them. Vivienne read out bits. It was singularly appropriate to Jock, who, like my hero, is a poet in an advertising business for the sake of the cash. He picked out the phrase "the log book of eternity'. But I cannot find a title for it.

Feb. 3rd. Rather like a diary of Edgar Allan Poe. The brig heels over, the cargo of grain shifts, the captain in his pea-jacket is murdered, the boys are confined below. I don't want to be scudding before the breeze in the south Atlantic, but I do want

to be living for months somewhere where I don't have to think every day about cashing cheques for which there is no provision. I want to go back to my old life on the beach, among the rocks with the scorpions. Only when I am alone walking at night in the streets of London down Beauchamp Place to Wilton Street do I live my own life of imagination. The moon is full. The expensive furniture and fittings gleam in the shop windows. Life palpitates somewhere, but nobody has any money here. Something must be done soon. The toadies of the millionaires seethe and wriggle. Bacteria in a swamp of offal. Knightsbridge is still the bright desert. James Thomson couldn't write poetry but he knew about the City of Dreadful Night. I plan to start an international magazine in Casablanca. San Franciso acclaims me, France translates me, why cannot I live in a heaven of my own devising. In the meantime the lavatory has gone wrong and we are all in danger of typhoid and diphtheria. By smoking and drinking with great intensity I hope to escape it. The baby may not be so fortunate. The unborn fœtus just hasn't a chance.

Feb. 6th. Found a title for my novel. The Frail Screen. Things come to me when I most need them, my mother's money, my poems, my ideas. But it is a quotation from Rossetti. How near have I been to that tragedy and how much it is my own. Nobody ever quite knows the truth about life, about what actually happened at La Sablonnière. At the Boston in Soho we decided to escape to Boulogne. Even Boulogne is better than here. Oh! Timbuktu how you escape me.

Feb. 7th. Blind and asthmatic I climb the Calvary of my days, but with asides of great pleasure. For instance a lunch with Catherine Harmon, a beautiful Canadian, which lasts until four o'clock. Love and death and Rossetti. I am fascinated by him, the bright link in the chain between Byron and Wordsworth, the first great romantics and our crushed selves of today. We spring from the mountain strength of simple Wordsworth and the great defier of the middle classes, our great Lord Byron, lover of the people and their enormous ——. From primroses and daffodils to the great naked stature of European women, or should one say women *tout court*. I want to write poetry, I want to love life. From the office in London to the reed hut by the sea. If we could only forget about money for one short month. Half the night awake thinking of Boulogne, Bordeaux, anywhere out of this. I will caress the heart of life and die unclothed and alone but in the hot light of the south.

Feb. 12th. How unsuspectedly interesting is the life of Rossetti. So dark and true, and truthfully caddish, yet like us all. I am like a rat in a cage, I don't know where to turn. For the last three days we were in Boulogne. What is the good of that. What I want to do is to fly to Bordeaux, go by train to Gibraltar and Tangier. In a word go back to my old life abroad. Yet I am just beginning to make some kind of a name for myself. But I must get away to the heat and the light and the absence of money worries. There must be a break soon. But will it be possible to succeed in English poetry in the alleys of Morrocan towns? *The Frail Screen* is my touchstone. I feel I might even make a success of the novel. If I can hold the attention of people like Vivienne Koch and Jock Graham I can surely write in this form. But I must go south, I must get away. I must form an atmosphere around me in which I can create a work of art whether it be here in Knightsbridge or in Marrakech.

Feb. 13th. Shall I ever get to it—le Sud Marrocain, the hard cold and heat of the full south. To beat money with time is what I think I can do. To beat the horror of northern Europe by a long life in Africa. Let all literature lapse if I can only live in the heat—even the dust. Disgust with what I am doing in this lousy London is a powerful incentive. The coal has run out. We try to keep up fires with slack—coal dust, the dustiest of destinies. I have asthma every night. I have to fight a lone male battle against women. Money to get to Africa and life and the hot sun of reality. The little clicques of European poets what do they know about the world in their mean bedrooms in the dying capitals. Slithering through the puddles between the cobblestones of Boulogne I was back in France, but France extends to Lake Tchad.

WREY GARDINER

WHAT BUT CATALOGUES OF COLOURS?

Selected Poems by WALLACE STEVENS (Faber 12s. 6d.).

IT is pleasant always to come across the selected works of a great or good poet that have been selected by the author himself; for, difficult though the task may be for him, it is usually more satisfactory than anyone else's selection can be, and never more so than in the case of Wallace Stevens, a poet so

variously interpreted and so variously esteemed. But, though it is pleasant, it is also often somewhat disappointing to find that one's hero does not include his *Ode on the Death of the Five Squawking Echoes* or whatever it may have been that one privately considered his best work. One always approaches such a selection with some trepidation, therefore, but with Stevens, as one might have expected, one's fears are not realised. Taking into account the large amount of Stevens' work that is memorable, this selection is about as good as such a selection could be; and what a marvellous book it makes!

Stevens' poems are the poems of a craftsman; they glitter and sparkle as the light of intelligence strikes them; and all his moods are here, from the earlier imagist poems with their brilliant sheen and gloss, the epigrams with their peculiar caustic tang, the imperial cadences of *"Le Monocle de Mon Oncle"*, to the more elaborately philosophical later poems, still instinct with wit, humour and élan, which explore the purposes and nature of poetry and of reality. It is idle, more or less, among such wealth to single out particular poems for praise. Stevens' quality is unique, and reading him a unique pleasure I cannot too strongly recommend, whether it be *"Thirteen Ways of Looking at a Blackbird"*, *"Depression before Spring"* or the longer and magnificent *"Man with a Blue Guitar"* and *"Notes Toward a Supreme Fiction"*. His poems are full of lights and colours, of changing tones, high seriousness and simple fun—the glitter of appearances and the gleam of reality. And among all the sparkle is the hard core of purpose and reason, and craft:

> *"Out of this same light, out of the central mind,*
> *We make a dwelling in the evening air,*
> *In which being there together is enough."*

These are more than mere catalogues of colours; they are poems of the sensibilities; and for all the surface glitter, it is as intellectual rather than emotional food that they delight.

Of the things left out, I regret most the slight but charming *"Apostrophe to Vincentine"* and the long *"Montachet-le-Jardin"* and *"Esthetique du Mal"*, but I find it difficult to see what could have been displaced to make room for these. But these are very small matters when it comes to the book as a whole, which is admirable, and produced with Faber's usual immaculate finesse.

NICHOLAS MOORE.